Please send your articles on or before 5th of January, March, May, July, September and November.

**JANUARY- FEBRUARY**
- Central South US
  - Peru
- Eastern Central Africa
  - Kenya, Congo, South Sudan, Uganda
- Italy-Malta
- North Mexico
- Indonesia

**MARCH- APRIL**
- West Africa (Senegal, Burkina Faso)
- New York-Toronto
- Europe-BFMN
  - Belgium, France, Hungary, Netherlands
- Southeast Latin America (Brazil, Paraguay)
  - Great Britain
  - Egypt-Sudan
  - Ecuador
- Colombia-Venezuela and Cuba

**MAY- JUNE**
- Mid-North America
- Lebanon-Syria
- West Mexico
- Australia/Aotearoa-NZ
- Eudist Family
- East Asia
  - Cambodia, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam
- South Africa

**JULY- AUGUST**
- Bolivia-Chile
- Northeast Asia
  - China, Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan, South Korea
- Germany-Albania
- The Isles (Madagascar, Mauritius, Reunion)
- Portugal
- Austria-Switzerland-Czech Republic
- Singapore-Malaysia
- Spain

**SEPTEMBER- OCTOBER**
- South West India
- Central East India-Nepal
- Ireland
- Sri Lanka-Pakistan

**In This Issue :**

P. 3 - Message of Sr Ellen Kelly.
By Communications Office

P. 4 - We are all Migrants.
By Province of Colombo/Venezolana

P. 5- Partnership in Mission
By Sr. Andrea Mac Eachen

P. 7 - Like Hoffman.
By Chris Kalinski

P. 9 - Spreading Love across the World.
By Meeka

P. 10 - From New York /Toronto Unit to Rome.
By Sr. Mary Farren

P. 11 - A Structure at the service of the Mission.
By Hubert H.M. Janssen

P. 12– The Blessing of the international experience.
By Liam Michael Quinn

P. 14 - Support in the time of COVID-19 Crisis.
By GSIF Office

P. 16– Response To COVID-19
By GSJP Office

P. 17– Key Learning
Echoes from Child Safeguarding office

P. 18– Resources for COVID-19 Situation
Echoes from Child Safeguarding office

P. 19– Webinar with Br. Philip Pinto
Formation Webinar
April 24, 2020 St. Mary Euphrasia Feast
Message of Sr. Ellen Kelly, Congregational Leader

Dear Sisters and Partners in Mission,

On this Feast of our Foundress, we pray and reflect on this woman, St. Mary Euphrasia who lived so long ago, but still is alive in us. She continues to guide us and challenge us to live our charism of merciful love. She was a true daughter of St. John Eudes and the spirituality of our Congregation is centered on the person of Christ with devotion to the Heart of Jesus and Mary.

Mary Euphrasia saw the image of God in every person, no matter what their life had been like. And, as you know she had deep friendships with lay people we call them Partners in Mission today! She relied on them for support, not only for financial support, but also for their vision and their encouragement to her in the ministry. The image of the Good Shepherd was very important to her because she saw in that, that God had great compassion always for those who were lost, forgotten and judged.

And this is what she wanted us to always live out of that kind of concern for the person who no one seems to be caring about. She lived her whole life forming the Sisters and the mission Partners by her example and by writing trying to help them to embrace God’s love and to give that love to every person they encountered. She still is forming us in this way to this very day when we reflect on her life, she has helped us to understand that what we do today goes back many, many years and it brings us not only to today but to tomorrow.

So being with us today, we hear her saying: “Dear God, what are we doing in this world and why are we here, if not to contribute to the well-being of our neighbors. Dear daughters, do as I did, she said. I had no great talents. I have done nothing great. I only loved but I loved with all the strength of my soul. Just love!”

So let us give thanks to God for all the blessings we have been given and we are grateful for all of you who continue to live out this charism today especially in the work you are doing under the circumstances that we are living. I am sure Mary Euphrasia is very, very proud of each one of you. Thank you and I hope you will have a good celebration this day.
“It's not just about migrants, they are our brothers who seek a better life, away from poverty, hunger and exploitation.” Pope Francis

By Venezuelan Colombo Province

We are all migrants. In the history of salvation, we see it from the call that Abraham received. We see it through all the migrations of the people of Israel, to Jesus himself, who was a refugee, a migrant. From the moment of his birth, Jesus is identified with the history of Israel as a pilgrim, a migrant and a refugee...

Jesus’ story could well be that of a migrant family who is currently crossing land and sea to escape oppression, hunger, poverty and death in their country.

The situation that migrants are experiencing represents a real humanitarian crisis.

The socio-political context in which the Venezuelan people are living is affecting Latin America. Colombia, like other countries, was not prepared to face, attend to or respond assertively to the migrant population. The Good Shepherd Community, Venezuelan Colombo Province, has felt very closely the reality of misery, abandonment and illness of so many men, women, girls and boys who decided to leave their homeland en masse, heading for the unknown and leaving behind their families, friends and roots, in search of a better life in our country.

Responding to this reality we committed some apostolates to address this situation mainly in the city of Cúcuta on the Venezuelan border, and in the Transport Terminals of cities such as Medellín, Cali and Bogotá.

The Colombo Venezuelan Province, in its desire to reach out and offer a message of hope, has been carrying out an exercise of rapprochement and listening to support migrant families from the Human Mobility program with the thematic axis of "Intervention of Women and the family towards a safe migration". We seek to be bearers of life and hope by providing concrete facts; by welcoming, guiding and accompanying migrant women; and, by seeking to reduce the situations of risk and vulnerability of these women and their families in the face of problems such as Human trafficking, prostitution, sexual abuse and labor exploitation.

Currently, a growing group of Venezuelan women and their families is benefiting from this project through a comprehensive inter-institutional training. The final goal of this project is to enable them to access productive projects that allow them to generate their own income.
Partnership in Mission
Province of Great Britain and Angola/Mozambique

By Sr. Andrea MacEachen

Sister Eileen and Sister Andrea set out from Scotland for Angola on the 10th February 2020. It was with great excitement and enthusiasm we travelled far to experience the partnership we share with our Sisters in Angola/Mozambique.

On the feast-day of Our Lady of Lourdes, we arrived in Talatona Community in Luanda after our twenty-hour journey. We were welcomed in wonderful style with the Sisters and girls singing joyfully on the steps of the Convent and then we were served the beautiful fruits of this country, before praying together the Rosary and Evening Prayer - WE HAD ARRIVED!

The aim of the partnership is to create solidarity between our two Provinces focused on long term development plans and improving structures and services. Working with GSIF, Angola has set up a mission development office and during our short ten-day visit we saw in direct action what the sector has achieved in just a few years.

We started the first morning with a visit to the Susan Chia College in Luanda. There are students of all ages from very young people taking literacy classes to older children and adults taking classes in sewing, cooking, computers and languages. The classes were full of enthusiastic students hungry to learn. They all expressed such gratitude for this school and such joy in the act of learning. My heart melted when I saw them take so seriously what we take for granted in our own country.

During the time spent with the Community they told us stories about their experiences during the many years of war in their country. Many of the Sisters had themselves suffered greatly at that time. We came to realise we were among a group of heroic women who have been through much pain and horror. These are women of deep faith and their faith seems so strong that no matter what the privations, they take joy in their life of prayer in Community.

The next day we set off for what the Sisters called “The North”. Sister Rita said we were making for the “Bush”. We set off in a wee truck on the worst roads I have ever experienced. The driver expertly avoided as many craters on the road as he could but when Sister asked us if we were alright in the back, I replied that one would pay good money for a full body massage like this in Britain! We passed magnificent scenery but also many little villages where the people seemed to be living very poorly. We stopped many times to buy fruit and vegetables that were being sold at the side of the road.

We broke the long journey at our little Community in Samba Caju where the sisters live in a tiny house which has suffered greatly in the war. The Sisters shared a meal with us and showed us their ministries. They look after some very distressed children, mostly girls but there was a little boy there too. The stories are sad, but it is such a blessing that the Sisters are there. They also run a little clinic where they treat local people for a variety of health issues, as well as being a strength and support to many women who have been through the trauma of war. This was yet another Community of brave women helping those at the very margins of their society.
Finally, we arrived at Camabatela and were welcomed by dear Sister Veronica whom we knew from her stay in Our Community in Britain. She and a wonderful group of young girls welcomed us with smiles, hugs and, once again, singing. After more wonderful Angolan fruit, we retired after our long journey. We awoke the next morning to the sound of hundreds of children making their way to the school of St Francis where Sister Veronica teaches and which we run in partnership with the Capuchins.

Before visiting the school, we looked around our maternity clinic which is staffed by the Sisters. Many women call in here for treatment and medication on their way to work in the fields. The equipment and medication are limited, but the sisters do a wonderful job providing for the maternity needs of women and babies in the area.

Also in Camabatela, is the Training Centre for girls. There are twelve of them living in two classrooms. They are beautiful young women aged from 14 to 19 years old, all sleeping in one classroom, while the classroom next door is their living room and kitchen. This accommodation is inadequate for this number of girls, so the Sisters have planned a purpose-built accommodation for them and others like them who are sent from their villages to try and improve their lives. It will cost twenty-five thousand dollars, but they do not have the funds yet. Nevertheless, the girls have built a lovely community spirit among themselves, helping and caring for each other.

The sisters work from 5 o’clock in the morning till 9 o’clock at night, teaching, nursing, caring, counselling, cooking, cleaning, gardening and many, many other tasks. They do it always with a smile on their faces and with great faith that it is God’s work and God will not abandon them.

This faith is expressed in their wonderful vibrant liturgy where they communicate their love and gratitude in joyful and enthusiastic singing and movement. It was a wonderful honor to be present at the Holy Mass here in the Capuchin church, a never-to-be-forgotten experience.

Another of the main reasons for our visit was to see the newly opened St John Eudes Secondary School in Kikolo. One young man told us in very good English that the school had saved his life. He said he had been drifting for four years, with no education until he found this School. When Sr Rita asked him what he would do with his education he said he would spend his whole life going around encouraging others to get an education. “I just want people to get what I have now” he said. This statement moved us all and when we saw on a large poster, on the outside wall of the school, the sign saying that this school was built in partnership with our own Province we were very moved and touched by the gratitude expressed.
Like Hoffman…

By Chris Kalinski

My wife is the most beautiful person on the planet. That may sound like an objective statement, but it holds the most truth of anything I have written, said or thought. Her name is Dustin and it has often caused confusion when she introduces herself. She has a go-to response when met with looks of bewilderment - "Like Hoffman...". It is always said with a smile and laugh.

"Feel a lively compassion for persons. Treat all in a large hearted way."

St. Mary Euphrasia

"Do not be content to love with your small human heart; that is too small. But love with your Great Heart."

St. John Eudes

Dustin and I first met when she began to work at a K-12 out-of-district special education school in central New Jersey. I had been working at the school for three years when Dustin was hired. It was my first teaching job, although I had been working in education as a paraprofessional and substitute teacher for six years prior to teaching. Over the course of those six years, I had encountered many types of students and faculty. Each had influenced my professional and personal life to an extent, but I was in for the most challenging and rewarding part of my life when I began teaching.

The students of the school were not having their education and/or socio-emotional needs met within their home districts. For some, this had been happening for years. By the time they got to the school, they were often jaded. I found early on that building trust, through action and words, was the beginning of building a relationship with the students which, in turn, would allow for the doors to be open to help address their needs. I learned this through observations of the faculty - some of whom had been working with the special education community for decades. The faculty I learned the most from were the ones who treated each student with kindness and patience.

When Dustin began, she was in her mid-twenties. We worked together in the classroom and I saw her interact with the students the same as the experienced teachers have. She presented warmth, compassion and enthusiasm in each interaction and immediately gained the respect of the students. The students began to come to her with issues large and small, academic and personal. Administration began moving her to any classroom that needed support, a substitute for the day, or any other help. She coached the softball team. Dustin also created an after-school intramurals program. Originally it was a program for students whom wanted to participate in friendly competitive sports. It quickly grew to be whatever the students wanted it to be – sports, arts and crafts, homework help, baking – anything! Intramurals soon included a third of the students. It was a place for students to feel safe, make friends and/or to break from often difficult homelives. Through everything, Dustin treated each student with kindness and respect. Her actions were not due to any training she had received, it was from her heart. Her large heart.

As the school year progressed, Dustin and I became friends and eventually she fell for my irresistible charm and we began dating. After a few days I came to a realization - one that many have come to in their own lives - that she is the most beautiful person in the world. Everything she does, she does for others.

“Love all persons whatever their background, their nationality, their race. Devote yourselves to their happiness.”

St. Mary Euphrasia
Time moved on. Dustin and I married. We both moved on to different employment. Dustin was finishing her Masters of Social Work and worked for the VA, Hurricane Sandy disaster relief and a county-based mental health organization in Monmouth County, New Jersey. Dustin began in the PATH program, assisting homeless persons in obtaining housing. One of the most important aspects of her job was the Point-in-Time. Point-in-Time is a once a year count of Monmouth County’s homeless population that began before dawn usually in February. She approached it with the same attitude as she at the school - kindness and compassion. She believes all persons deserve shelter and she went out of her way - crawling under the boardwalk, visiting tent cities, speaking at length to people, etc. - to ensure every person felt cared for and important. Her large heart was shining bright.

“Union is, in fact, your defense and your support, and by the strength it gives you, you will extend your branches far and wide. Look at the universe, there is only one sun which warms and unifies it. It is the same for you, your sun is a single heart.”

*St. Mary Euphrasia, Conferences, p. 501*

While Dustin was doing this, I started working at Collier Schools - run by the Sisters of the Good Shepherd - in September of 2013. It was at Collier that I was introduced to the mission. I was struck by the wisdom and simple, maybe even primal, message of the mission - just love.

SME is speaking of a universal heart. A heart that is limitless. Those in the mission are aware of the universal heart and the THINGS it is capable of. Others are unaware of the mission, yet act in accordance with it. I thought of the creation of similar technologies, such as archery and pyramids, by cultures that never had contact with each other. I thought of Srinivasa Ramanujan. I thought of the Beatles, Fred Rogers, Harriett Tubman, Dan Goor, Eleanor Roosevelt and countless others. All are/were working to make the world more inclusive and more diverse through a simple and profound idea – just love – a stance all mission participants relate to.

The mission is universal. It lives inside of everyone. It is something you feel in your bones. It is a fire that is within everyone. For some, it shines bright and all can see it. For others, choice and circumstance has dimmed the fire. But the fire can never be extinguished. It is the duty of all, those within the mission and those who are not, to help others strengthen their fire and to accept the help and wisdom of others to fuel their own fires.

As I became more familiar with the mission, I began to see it, in theory and in practice, throughout the world and within my life. I saw it in police, firefighters and EMTs. I saw it in the teachers and faculty I have and do work with. I saw it in numerous organizations and NGOs. Most of all, I saw it in Dustin, the most beautiful person in the world.

**Reflection Questions**

1) Who have you seen live the mission of GS and how?
2) Think of an example when you were able to demonstrate the mission to someone else.
3) What was the most unexpected way you have had your zeal refreshed/reinvigorated?
4) Where have you seen the mission in action outside of GS?
Spreading Love across the World

By Meeka

Girls in our Sister Program in Lebanon

It all began with a visit from Sr. Michelin from Lebanon in April 2019. In response to that visit, Nancy Nicolas, a Treatment Counselor who once resided at the group home, organized a service-learning project with the youth that truly reflected the meaning of the season.

Nancy gathered the youth for numerous mindfulness groups and incorporated the craft of bracelet making as a sensory activity to engage in while discussing issues and concerns. The ultimate goal was to reach out to other Good Shepherd youth as a sign of peace and compassion. In October Sr. Hanan, a Good Shepherd Sister from Lebanon, visited the group home. She shared stories of war torn places where other youth lived and described the daily conditions they faced. These stories touched our hearts and helped us to realize just how fortunate we are to be in the care of the Good Shepherd Sisters here in the USA.

Sr. Hanan was nice enough to deliver the bracelets to the group home in Lebanon as we feared that they would not make it by mail. Well, to our delight, on December 23rd we received a thank you email from the group homes in Lebanon with pictures of the girls holding the bracelets. It was a true connection across the world shared by young women who have all experienced trauma and loss yet touched by true empathy and love. It was such a humbling and beautiful experience that speaks to our commitment to growth, change, and social learning. It was the highlight of our year.

A True Good Shepherd Mission

Making those bracelets for the girls made me feel genuinely happy and proud of myself and those around me. Although it's not the most impressive thing, the bracelets were a way for us to say to the girls “We know what your going through and we want to make you as happy as possible”.

I felt so honored to hear Sr. Hanan’s story and to know that the youth would be so thrilled to receive our small gifts. My absolute favorite thing to do is make others smile. Knowing that they will smile when receiving the bracelet makes me content. Listening to Sr. Hanan’s story made me realize how fortunate us kids are. I'm so thankful I got this opportunity.”
Province of New York/Toronto

From the New York/Toronto Unit to Rome
Our International Pre-Novitiate Program

By Sr. Mary Farren

About a year ago, the telephone rang one day and little did I or anyone else know at that moment that a simple request would lead to my becoming actively involved in our Congregation’s history for beginning an international novitiate. When asked if it would be possible to spend a few weeks in Rome to help eight pre-novices learn English at the novitiate house, I knew it would be quite different from my ministry at the time but certainly possible to do. My involvement with them began near the end of the summer, 2019. Along with other Sisters and partners in mission who also served as tutors, each of us was able to help for a few weeks between July and November. When it was evident some in the group needed additional time for learning the language, I was asked in November to spend additional time with four of them – but rather than a few weeks, it would be a few months! Having returned to our provinces for a short time, I and four pre-novices (Eugenio, Bela, Veronica and Adulce) who are from Angola and Mozambique, returned to Rome in February - this time living in the Generalate. Our living and learning environment was very different and each of us would be doing more than English lessons.

Shortly after arriving, as the pre-novitiate program was advancing, so did the situation in Rome - with the intrusion of the corona virus. Plans for various learning experiences soon changed: classroom learning with a teacher present became learning remotely; a ministry experience of preparing dinner for homeless people twice a month could not begin; and, government restrictions eliminated travel in the city for cultural events. Instead, we have been house-bound for several weeks and do not know when we can travel for ministry. Our international pre-novitiate and novitiate programs have begun amid many surprises including a very welcome one - having a prolonged period with a visiting priest at the Generalate. This enables us to have daily Mass and we had all Holy Week liturgies that included music and readings from five different languages. We enjoyed other Easter festivities, too, and recognized our blessings.

Recently, persons I served at home have begun asking when would I be returning to help them again. They knew the plan had been for me to return briefly in May to the Boston area where I live in order to participate in our Chapter and then return to the pre-novices in Rome. However, the wide spread virus has changed life for each of us in recent weeks. Our Chapter dates changed and, as happens to many people, travel plans must also change to a yet unknown date. Our God of Surprises continues to invite each of us to serve in ways that we may not expect - whether this invitation comes through a phone call or a virus. The travel distance between my New York/Toronto unit and Rome may be great but our Congregational unity is clearly present – and helping pre-novices to learn a language that will enable them to serve others in the future is a blessing!
The Good Shepherd International Foundation (GSIF) was founded by the Congregational Leadership Team in 2009. It started in 2007 as a one-woman office known as Mission Development Office, a name still used by many, aimed to offer assistance to the Units in developing their ministries in countries that needed most financial and technical assistance in Africa, Asia Pacific and Latin America. In 2019 GSIF was providing services to 71 ministries of the Congregation in 25 countries, serving directly over 57,000 people. GSIF supports sisters and mission partners to start or develop projects, helping to improve their quality, capacity, transparency and effectiveness, through training and technical assistance during all the steps of what we call the Mission Development Process”. In the beginning funding projects was the main objective, but in the years the scope of GSIF’s activities has evolved to better respond to the emerging needs of the mission. Today capacity building, monitoring and evaluation, strategic planning, training and advocacy have been integrated and became core objectives. We still have the GSIF office in Rome but also have a Regional Office in Asia, one in Latin America. We hope that there will be soon an office dedicated to Africa.

I have been working with GSIF since 2011. In 2013 I was asked to join an Advisory Board to the sisters in charge. People from all over the world with different expertise reflected together and assisted the sisters and the Mission Development Office in organizing GSIF and the relation to the Congregation. In 2015 the CLT nominated on the Board, in addition to 6 sisters, also 6 women and men from outside the Congregation. Two are from the province Europe BFMN: Pierre Harang (financial expert) and me. As Secretary and Member of the Executive Committee I assist in preparing the Board Meetings and I am available for in between reflection moments by Skype. Once a year the Board meets for 3 days in Rome and always has a joined meeting with the CLT. Although the Congregation and GSIF legally are separated entities they are intensely united in mission to ensure that each woman, girl and child, especially the most vulnerable, can enjoy fullness of life.

It’s an honor and pleasure to work in an international team of sisters and mission partners who operate at the grass roots level or assisting them. Because it’s all about the people we serve: women and girls who are longing for a better future, for (economic) justice, peace, equality, education. Often, they are deprived of human rights and living in poverty.

St. Jean Eudes and St. Mary Euphrasia answered to the challenges in their times in great solidarity with women and children in difficulties and came up with remarkable ideas and solutions. They knew partnership was vital for success. We, Congregation and GSIF, share fundamental values and are inspired by the spirituality of ‘our’ Saint Founders. It’s something to cherish and develop further.

Everyone likes to share success stories like the Bon Pasteur Kolwezi community program in Congo, that is helping more than 5,000 people – mostly children, girls and women – to escape the harsh life in the cobalt artisanal mines to attend schools, build alternative livelihoods and create more secure communities, or the Economic Justice Project to empower hundreds of women from India’s rural Dalit villages. Both were beautifully captured in the documentaries Maisha and Mahila. But of course, there are also challenges and aspects that can be improved. One of them is the cooperation with communities in countries where GSIF isn’t active in yet: North America, Australia/New Zealand and last but not least Europe. The experience and wisdom from Africa, Asia and Latin America is very valuable to us in the North. I am looking forward to integrating new relationships with sisters and mission partners from the North into the Foundation for the benefit of the ministries of the Congregation. It makes me feel proud and grateful that our province is contributing to all this with (wo)men, influence and funds.

Information: www.gsif.it
Mahila: www.mahilafilm.com
Maisha: www.youtube.com/watch?v=rb0a0t8JInc
The Blessing of International Experience

By Liam Michael Quinn

Before making her final vows, Sr. Mary Attallah from the Province of Egypt-Sudan had the opportunity for a six-month international experience in the Province of Mid-North America (PMNA). Affectionately known there as ‘Sr. Mary of Egypt’, she was based in the Maria Hall community in Danville, Pennsylvania, and was able to visit several communities in the province. During the current global pandemic, she is staying in the St. Euphrasia community in Chubra, Cairo, from where she spoke to us about her experience.

What do you feel you brought to the PMNA community and what did you learn from it?

I lived with the community at Maria Hall which is an inter-congregational assisted living community where sisters from both lifestyles of our Congregation live together with sisters from the congregations of Saints Cyril and Methodius, the Discalced Carmelites, and the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur. This was the first time that I had lived with sisters from other congregations and it was even the first time that I had lived with elderly sisters. I think I was the youngest sister in the community and I feel my presence brought them joy and energy. I shared stories with them about our lives in Egypt and the life of my province. The most important thing I learned from the sisters at Maria Hall was how age doesn’t restrict anything. It was wonderful to see all the sisters there so full of life doing so many things. What surprised me most was that I couldn’t tell which sister belonged to which congregation! I felt that I belonged among them and that we all belonged together as one, all part of the same family.

What valuable or unexpected lessons did you learn while being in North America that you would like to bring back and incorporate into the life of your province?

I had so many unique and wonderful experiences with the sisters in the PMNA, including the opportunities to visit communities in St. Louis, Washington DC, Minnesota, San Francisco, New Jersey, and New York. I never once felt like an outsider and learned to deeply appreciate how they welcome...
people and make them feel at home - this is something I will carry with me into the future. I was also previously unaware of how active the sisters are in their ministries and the extent to which the laity share in their work. It was so valuable to see how these mission partners share Good Shepherd spirituality and it offered me a real sign of hope for the future. In Egypt, the laity isn’t involved as much in our ministries, however, I now see just how important it is to develop and nurture mission partners, like in the PMNA.

*I understand you had the opportunity to attend a one-week residential course based on Pope Saint John Paul II’s Theology of the Body, how was this experience for you?*

This course gave me a new perspective on how God looks at our bodies and how we look at our own bodies. The week was also a great opportunity to live and study together with an international group of religious and lay people. We shared our daily lives in community and exchanged stories about our backgrounds and cultures. I met many people from around the world and made many friends who I’m still in contact with today.

*Tell me how your international experience specifically affected your life and your preparation for making a lifetime commitment in the Congregation.*

Even before my experience in the PMNA, I had the opportunity to attend two other international events at our Motherhouse in Angers. All these opportunities have allowed me to learn about the richness of our Congregation, become more open-minded, and to see things from a global perspective. Before these experiences, I saw things from within the confines of my province but now I see that our circumstances aren’t that different and that we all face the same problems and concerns for our Congregation all over the world. The experiences I’ve had have filled me with so much more hope for the future of our Congregation as I’ve met sisters and learned more about their work and the work carried out by our mission partners.

*What suggestions would you give to a sister who is about to embark on an international experience?*

I would suggest she be open to everything and everyone; to not be afraid to take part in things and to do so with enthusiasm so she can reap the rewards and strengthen her sense of belonging to the Congregation. I really believe these international experiences are so valuable and a true blessing!

*Sr. Mary breaking bread with friends during the Theology of the Body course.*
United in global solidarity to support the most vulnerable affected by COVID-19 crisis

During these hard and uncertain times, we are rediscovering ourselves as members of a global, fragile, but united human family. As GSIF we do our best to keep connected among ourselves and with all mission partners around the world, which are coping with the impact of the COVID-19 on their countries.

As the pandemic continues spreading, we are particularly concerned about the impact it can have on the most vulnerable and fragile communities in poorer countries of the world, whose populations are already facing multiple threats to their health and livelihoods. This global crisis can exacerbate pre-existing conditions of poverty, isolation, discrimination, affecting disproportionally the most fragile.

As the virus is affecting more than 200 countries in Asia, Europe, Africa, Middle East, North America, Latin America, and forcing governments to shut down all activities, last March we asked our local partners to conduct a rapid survey in all 35 countries where they are based on how this crisis is impacting the 84 Good Shepherd projects we support and the lives of the people we serve.

Through this immediate assessment, which is being followed by a constant weekly monitoring of the situation, an unprecedented scenario emerged and raises grave concerns. 67% of the projects reported that their governments imposed significant restrictive measures, either very strict up to total lockdown. In response to those measures, 69% of projects have currently stopped or scaled down and only 28% keep functioning adopting preventive measures, such as awareness raising on Covid19 or social distancing practices, to minimize the risk of infection.

Most schools, training centers, day-care programs, outreach activities and services to migrants, had to be shut down or reduced to minimum, leaving thousands of girls, women and children in extremely precarious conditions, at risk of relapsing in situations of child labor, prostitution, trafficking, domestic violence on children and women, malnutrition, extreme poverty.

Moreover many residential and healthcare programs are suffering as well and while they carry on, they face major challenges to keep residents and patients and guests safe, and at the same time protect the health of the staff.

The Good Shepherd programs are deeply rooted in the affected communities: sisters and lay partners have been living there before, during and will continue to serve them after the current crisis. From the very early beginning of the pandemic they are already envisioning alternative plans to provide services and carry on basic activities for women, girls and children involved in the programs, while respecting the norms to avoid contagion.

A strong commitment to the mission has stimulated innovative ideas to immediately step up concrete responses to keep supporting the programs’ participants and reduce the pandemic’s negative social and economic impact; such as offering psychological counseling for migrant women in Colombia via telephone, family distribution of hygiene kits and food packages for Venezuelan migrants, teachers giving classes via WhatsApp for the children of the poorest barrios in Ecuador, advocacy campaigns for migrants’ rights launched online in Chile, delivery of protective equipment in the poorest slums of the Philippines and food provisions to refugees in Malaysia and production and delivery of facemasks and home packages to families living in isolated tea plantation in Sri Lanka.

One of our social business projects in Kenya is planning to help local women convert the soap and detergent productions into sanitizers and use the sewing machines to make masks and assemble kits for the
local population. In DR Congo our partners are planning awareness-raising initiatives to sensitize on COVID-19 the mining communities in Kolwezi, considering local traditional cultures and habits.

This global emergency response needs additional funding and therefore GSIF launched an appeal to donate to the COVID-19 Global Solidarity Project aimed to support our programs in their efforts to prevent the rapid spread of the pandemic and support the resilience of the most vulnerable, especially those in higher risk environments and countries. More information on data and updates on our global response are available in a dedicated section of the GSIF website.

Girls from the Economic Empowerment Project in Kanina, DRC, preparing soap bars to be distributed to the local community.

Distribution of hygiene kits and food packages for Venezuelan migrant women participants in the project “Mujer y familia hacia una migración segura” in Cucuta, Colombia

Women form the Economic Justice Project in Central East India receiving awareness session on COVID-19 prevention measures.
Japan/Philippines Province Response to COVID-19

From the Japan/Philippines Unit on their response to the current COVID-19 situation in their communities:

“Our current response is minimal but meaningful. The province was in the middle of preparations and duration of the chapter when our government declared lockdown. Our priority is to adhere to the social distancing and promote solidarity.”

Some of the highlights of the response are as follows:

- All the RGS-run schools are closed until further notice but online education platforms will be utilized to continue the learning and academic requirements.

- Most of our staff are on a work from home scheme until lockdown is lifted in their specific regions.

- Postponement of all activities such as trainings, workshops, etc.

- Shelters follow strict social distancing protocols.

- We sent meals and many of our delicacy products to public hospitals as solidarity to frontliners and to the sick. Some of those institutions are the Baguio City Police, National Kidney and Transplant Institute, Philippine Children's Medical Center, Qurino Memorial Medical Center, and Amang Rodriguez Medical Center.

photos provided by Sr. Ailyn.
Dear Sisters and Partners in Mission,

Thank you very much for joining the webinar on Wednesday, 15th of April. We are grateful for your participation. Please see below the details and key learning points from the webinar. Title: “Stay safe and safeguard others in times of COVID-19; Implications, Challenges, and Opportunities”

**Key learnings:**

- Ensure a safe environment for operation and activities
- Know the latest facts on Covid-19
- Establish a procedure or a check list if a Sister or a staff member becomes unwell
- Promote reliable sources of information as a team or unit
- Address mental health and support network
- Stay connected virtually and try to adapt to a new way of working.

If you have missed the live webinar, you may access a recording of it, only in English, by downloading the following link: *(the link expires in a week – start date is 24 April; end date is 1st May)*

https://wetransfer.com/downloads/cc1c8d3023cc9ca418c7a923499810702020042154619/ef0620e2a46d85f5433dc0018259f6c62020042154619/97fffc1

Please contact me in case you are not able to access the recorded version of the webinar before the expiring day. My email address is: valentina.picco@gssweb.org

Maryam and I will be available for any questions. Please do not hesitate to contact us anytime, as we are here to support you.

Stay safe and safeguard those around you.

*Valentina Picco*

*Child Safeguarding Coordinator*
## Resources To Help Deal with the Covid-19 Situation - Child Safeguarding Department

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource Title</th>
<th>Resource Link</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mental health and psychosocial considerations during the COVID-19 outbreak</td>
<td><a href="https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/mental-health-considerations.pdf">https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/mental-health-considerations.pdf</a></td>
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Invitation to Conversations with Brother Philip Pinto, cfc

Webinars based on the 2019 Supplement to the 2014 Formation Guidelines

In November 2019, we stated in the Introduction to the Supplement that there are four approaches required in today’s formation process: Experiential, Participatory, Contemplative and Connectedness.

In this new world of COVID-19, our “new normal” -- in which our way of being, living, working and relating has been totally and radically transformed almost in an instant – we ask ourselves how these four values underpin our vision of formation and deepen our awareness of the ‘new normal’ to which we are being invited? There is no going back to our old ways, there is no return to “business as usual.” The forces of Love are calling us forward to unimaginable visions of global and planetary solidarity and Unity.

...to return to “normal” is to miss an important God-invitation to turn our lives in a completely new direction, to first realize that God needs us to be God in the world; then to transform the energies of our present suffering into new creative energies of sympathetic planetary life, co-creators of compassion, peace, forgiveness, and shared resources, to create systems for a world converging toward complexified unity. Ilia Delio

Join Brother Philip Pinto, cfc Philip Pinto is a member of the Congregation of Christian Brothers and is currently based in Chandigarh, India working on the Renewal Team of the Indian Province. Prior to this he has been in leadership for 30 years including two terms as Congregation Leader.

4 conversations/webinars on May 12, 19, 26, and June 2, 2020

Rome time 2:00 pm – 3:30 pm

(We have selected this time to best facilitate the different time zones across the Congregation.)

All are invited, we ask Formation Teams, Local Leaders and Unit Leadership Teams to make every effort to participate in these conversations.

The conversation will be in English with simultaneous translation in French and Spanish.

Please save the dates.

We will send you the link to the Webinar a few days before the date.
Good Shepherd Newsletter

Thank you to the translators, and the proofreaders

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